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A Prolegomena to Critical Historiography

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Over the last decades we have witnessed the increased intellectualization of architecture. What was first a largely autodidactic interest in Heidegger, Bachelard, and Joyce, is now the topic of textbooks, anthologies, seminar papers, with the committed student having to be familiar with the likes of Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Barthes, Jameson, Gramsci, Derrida, Lacan, and now Deleuze. Though the architectural "take" on these philosophers is often inconsistent and spurious, the enterprise as a whole has to be understood within a system that is now almost a century old. Whether it was Le Corbusier's readings of Friedrich Nietzsche or Eric Mendelsohn's of Martin Buber, architects often turned to other disciplines, including psychology, Gestalt psychology in particular, to help position themselves within the intellectual determinants of modernity.¹ The "history of theory" is thus more than just a specialized problem of the avant-garde. It is equivalent with the history of modernity. And yet, despite the importance of these exchanges (and despite theory's increasing self-academizations), it is still difficult for us to easily assess and historicize them.

The Aesthetics of Revisionism

The question that we have to pose for ourselves is not simply how to frame the history of theory as a *historical project*—by focusing, as we scholars usually do, on issues of evidence, method, position and argument—but how to frame it as a philosophical project.² But this begs another question: How does one historicize the history of our discipline's intellections now that these intellections have impacted the very history that will investigate them? The problem returns us to the essential paradox of a modernity that advances both freedom and criticality simultaneously. How does one preserve the premise of avant-gardist speculation while creating a more precise framework for a *history* of those speculations? In other words, how do we while saving save avant-gardism from its own tendency to become a discipline, create the possibility for greater sophistication in our historical understanding of modernity?

To chart the problems one would face in attempting to construct a-history-of-modernist-intellection (the term modernist should be taken broadly to include Postmodernism), we have to realize that just as much as our history is colored by its appropriations of philosophy, philosophy has looked to the avant-garde as a testing ground of its own activities. As we all know, Heidegger wrote on van Gogh, Adorno on Stravinsky, Langer on Moholy-Nagy, Eco on Pollock, Foucault on Magritte, Derrida on Eisenman, Danto on Mapplethorpe, and Deleuze and Guattari on Klee. Unfortunately, the discipline of philosophy, is just as unprepared to critically address these exchanges as is the discipline of

history, and the reason is that despite their importance, these disciplines are constructed to purposefully obscure the very thing that they entail, an underlying anxiety about the position of intellectuals in relation to modernity.

The question of how to write a history of modernist intellection is thus at its outset an ambiguous one, for in deconstructing of the opposition of history and theory one has to admit that if there was anything the avant-garde achieved, it was the transformation of artists into functionaries of historical understanding. History, though always that which seemed to be the foil for avant-gardist self-promotion, was the very ground on which avant-gardism drew its sustenance. To outline the problem, let me begin with László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946). In his 1926 article, "Isms or Art,"³ Moholy-Nagy explains that Ism history, presumably driven by "art historians," is nothing but the attempt to "conquer the primary, autonomous, purely painterly means of creation," to which he adds that "there is no such thing as an Ism, but only the work of individual artists who have succeeded in achieving a conformity between their vision and the subconscious aspirations of their times."⁴

Moholy-Nagy may be critiquing art history, but he is still framing art in the context of a history, which, with a capital "H," privileges the synthesizing capacity of the artist, who can light the way into a future and presumably better age. It was a fictive proposition that by the 1920s could easily be believed, for Moholy-Nagy was well aware that there was a growing movement to objectify the historical-philosophical legitimacy of the avant-garde.⁵ Already Ruskin allocated to Turner a position of prominence akin to that of a free-thinking philosopher, arguing that he should be seen on a par with Francis Bacon.⁶ But Ruskin did not have the framework of avant-gardism to unify and obscure the intricate interrelationships between himself and Turner, and between historical projection and aesthetic production. It is a far different story with Moholy-Nagy. In arguing for a seamless unity of "seeing, feeling and thinking," Moholy-Nagy, as artist and critic wrapped into one, was clearly operating in an age in which this synthesis could be interpreted as an objectifiable factor in the history of civilization's unfolding. In "the building up of a given surface by the ego," it is no longer "so much the subjective experience that dominates, but rather the objective demands of color,"⁷ he argued, implying that the artist—i.e., Moholy-Nagy himself—produces more than just works of art for personal pleasure. The Moholy-Nagian artist is supposed to translate "manifold appearances" into "visual experiences" so as to philosophically document and improve the world.⁸ And this means that Moholy-Nagy sees himself not as the victim of modernism, but as its savior, and by extension as *our* savior.

If nineteenth-century post-Rankean historiography insisted on facts and the corroboration of empirical evidence as an essential aspect of the elevation of history out of myth and fantasy, the modern postpsychological idea of history demarcated a realm in which corroboration would come directly through the devices of the authenticated ego. History, the discipline, disappeared behind the veils of its seeming immanence. As far as I can see, not a single art historian has challenged the retroactive invasiveness of his or her discipline into a domain of history that was supposed to function without professional historians. This does not mean that today's historians have no place in a discussion about Moholy-Nagy, only that we have to reflect on the evolution and indeed the historiographic complexity of our modernist understanding of history.

Today's art and architectural historians, despite their success in reestablishing norms of objectivity, still work within a space scarred by the dialectics of modernist history. Nonetheless, one should not overlook the fact that the discipline of history itself has played an important role in these developments. I think in particular of the contribution of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), in whose work we see the early blurring of distinctions among artist, historian, and critic that was to play itself out again and again in twentieth-century bourgeois aesthetic philosophy. In the essays collected together by his students under the title *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* [Lived Experience and Poetry] (1906), Dilthey argued that modern poetry had finally moved beyond the narrow didacticism of the Enlightenment: The first poet to break down the barriers was Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. With him, Dilthey asserted, "the prevailing conceptual style of morality, influenced as it was by theology, was made obsolete by the vivid concept of life in literature."⁹ According to Dilthey, Friedrich Hölderlin took this one step further, the reason being that he "always lived in the context of his whole existence."¹⁰ Christoph Martin Wieland was the counterexample: "[T]hough rich in poetic talent," he was, according to Dilthey, content to remain at a restricted level of development.

In expanding the argument to the realm of politics, Dilthey rejected the classical model of great personages who rise above their contexts, favoring instead figures who participate to the fullest in their life and times. Bismarck, for example, determined the flow of history not because of his political savvy, but because he possessed a higher sense of *aesthetic* awareness that spoke to the nation as a whole. Bismarck's conception of history was therefore not appraised by Dilthey for its objectivity or accuracy, but rather for its effectiveness. Simply stated: Where life has "entered understanding, there is history."¹¹

In his much overlooked essay "The Three Epochs of Modern Aesthetics and Its Present Task" (1892),¹² Dilthey made it clear that his sympathy lies with "those venturesome artists who are not only able to see into the soul of our society" . . . but who are also capable of articulating something of the liberating vision for which our society yearns, and that as a result the aesthetics of our century "must be sought elsewhere than in compendia and thick textbooks."¹³ He added that, for a true writer, "everything that exists becomes understandable through that point on which all actions and feelings ultimately turn, never through the abstractions of the conceptual attitude."¹⁴ An artist, Dilthey stated, has to live in his art "as if that world alone existed."¹⁵

In challenging not only the abstractions of Enlightenment rationalism but also the sociological distance of the feudal aristocracy, Dilthey hoped to locate—to borrow the words of Herbert Marcuse—historical happenings in their "proper and original source," namely in the conflation of Being, Life, and History.¹⁶ Life, for Dilthey, then becomes "identical with history," and conversely, "at every point of history there is life,"¹⁷ the final result being a condition where "the mind becomes sovereign over the cobwebs of dogmatic thought."¹⁸ In that sense, Dilthey, as Marcuse recognized, relied heavily on Hegel, whose impact on avant-gardist historiography should not be underestimated. In the opening sentences of the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* [Lectures on the Philosophy of History] (1821), we read that history is not a "collection of general observations" glued together anecdotally from general reflections.¹⁹ Instead, history—"Philosophical History" as Hegel called it—is a force bringing people and entire nations into the inexorable pull of its dialectic. Napoleon, for example, "this world soul . . . on horseback," was nothing less than an unwitting instrument of the cosmic force of historical self-consciousness.

The intense focus on figures like Napoleon weakens the relevance of historiography (the study of what historians have to say about each other's work).²⁰ As Hegel explained it, historiography could establish a criticism of historical narratives according to their truth and credibility, but in reality, under the pretext of "higher criticism," it introduces "all the antihistorical monstrosities that a vain imagination could suggest." Subjective fantasies wind up replacing historical data. Historiography, in the Hegelian sense, can *only* survive if it becomes an activity of Reason advancing the cause of the dialectic.

The Enlightenment may have made history—and through history, philosophy—the essential figure of modern speculation, but its suspicions about the historiographic were to have long-lasting consequences (both positive and negative), especially once

Dilthey shifted his study from the ethereal premises of a pure dialectic to the more grounded promises of the newly established discipline of psychological science. For Dilthey, history works within the context of contemporary events, and thus the historian has to tap into not only what has happened but what is happening. The irony is that, with such tremendous emphasis being placed on participatory historiography, historians who wanted to enter the fray had to demonstrate that they could contribute in a positive way to the grand search for an age's philosophical essence. And this, in turn, meant that scholars had to position themselves in an antinomic relationship to their discipline. They could not simply be "historians," but rather had to possess what Arthur Danto, the philosopher-turned-art-critic, has called "a tremendous synoptic vision." And indeed, this is certainly how such noted critics as Adolf Behne, Herbert Read, Clement Greenberg, William Curtis, and Vincent Scully would like to be seen.²¹ They knew full well that if they were perceived as being too scholarly, like Wieland was for Dilthey, they would be perceived as part of the crisis of modernism and not part of its resolution. This was no trivial matter, especially after Friedrich Nietzsche, in a stunning critique of Immanuel Kant, accused the renowned philosopher of not being "a genuine human being": "A scholar can never become a philosopher. Even Kant could not manage it and despite the innate power of his genius remained to the very end in chrysalis state. Those who think these words unfair to Kant do not know what a philosopher is—not only a great thinker but a genuine human being. And when has a scholar ever turned out to be a genuine human being?"²²

This statement cast a pall over twentieth-century scholarship that art and architectural historians have never been able to shake off, largely because it provided an increasingly problematical "philosophical" foundation for the avant-gardist anti-intellectualist aesthetics of intellectualism.²³ Benedetto Croce added that it is not "the theory of history" that is important to history, but rather history itself, by which he meant that history is first of all something lived and only then conceptualized.²⁴ Coming from a philosopher, this seems particularly odd. But, post-Nietzscheans and, by extension post-Hegelians, like Dilthey, Marx, Croce, Dewey, Merleau-Ponty, and even Heidegger (all of whom were particularly important to architectural theory), driven by the tumult of the early twentieth century, were continually drawn to the space of psychological vitalism and its promise of an objectivity of experience, even after it had degenerated into formalism and dogmatism.²⁵ It was a type of coup in which the search for historicity within the psychologized space of modernity was to be led by committed "authentic" fighting in the quasi-interdisciplinary domains of art, life, philosophy, and politics against the

specter of an inauthentic scholarly enemy. In focusing on the positive aspect of this in the furthering of avant-gardist notions of self-worth, one should not ignore the fact that, through the process of familiarization (for that is ultimately an important subtext of avant-gardism), its antihumanist tendencies continue to resonate through twentieth-century discourse, even though its radical avant-gardist phase has, I believe, long since been discredited.

The Concealing Mechanisms of Historiography

It is now understandable why, beginning in the 1950s, there arose in art history an increasing frustration with the excesses that came in the wake of the modernist heroizations of the aesthetic Self. Methodology and objectivity became the new code words, with doctoral programs emerging by the dozens. With the creation of the College Art Association a new generation of scholars began to emphasize historical precision over artistic passion.

The trend toward objectivity in architectural history made itself felt in the 1970s, with the founding of Ph.D. programs in schools of architecture. The architectural equivalent of Erwin Panofsky at the Insitute for Advanced Studies would be among others Stanford Anderson at MIT, Manfredo Tafuri at the University of Venice, and Kenneth Frampton at Columbia.²⁶ They and others were part of a generation of intellectuals eager to find historiographic approaches that were less enamored with the efforts of the great modernists.²⁷ Their histories fortunately have always tolerated a greater experimentation in their historiographic constructions than what one found in art history, where the worlds of studio art and of history became, and still are, pretty much separate domains.

Despite the benefits that have come from this, one has to admit that, as a result, art history's historiographic presumptions have now often become so narrowly defined that they loose sight of the relationship between the history of the discipline and the history of modern aesthetic theory.²⁸ The play of subjectivity within the confines of art history's disciplinary structure is more often than not left out of the equation, as if it were discontinuous with the epistemological roots of disciplinary knowledge. There where it *is* recognized, it is either a specialized function of advanced methodology or the permissible ramblings of a few privileged senior historians. In both cases it is far removed from the tangled plurality of modernity's intellectual projection.

But even in architecture a critique of subjectivity must avoid the either/or polemics of scholarship versus avant-garde. After all,

even the most traditional scholarly practices are not as far removed from avant-gardist practice as it often pretends to be. Despite the seeming gulf between history and theory, we cannot overlook the fact that with dozens of master's degree programs in fine arts and an increasing number in architecture—all having been created in the last thirty years—the history of the avant-garde is now intimately connected to the history of pedagogy, funding, and even tenuring.²⁹ Unfortunately, this "validation" process is rarely addressed in histories of the avant-garde, since exposure would go against long-held assumptions about a supposedly independent and autonomous process of self-consciousness.

In actuality, the disciplining of the avant-garde is not antithetical to its agenda. On the contrary, it is the logical consequence of the avant-garde's attempt to insert itself into the discourse of modernity. Paul Klee's *Pedagogisches Skizzenbuch* (1925), published by the Bauhaus, for example, foreshadows a complex series of escalating intellectual returns. These became even more intense in the post-World War II years. The semantic, formalist, rationalist, and philosophical discourses introduced into architecture (by architects) were latter-day spin-offs of the attempts to control the pedagogical direction of architecture. The same holds true in art; the efforts of the 1960s feminists find their academic resolution in the various newly created Women's Studies programs and even in the National Museum for Women's Art in Washington, DC, founded in 1981.

The academizing of the avant-garde is thus a process that intertwines itself with developments in scholarship, so much so that thanks to a flourishing systems of exchange, borrowing, and appropriation, scholarship, even at its most conventional, has gained just as much from the avant-garde as the avant-garde has gained from it—in particular, how to dissimulate behind the veils of its own theoretical discourse. The scholarly authorial Self, despite its advancement in the past decades, remains just as remote from epistemological interrogation as the avant-garde is from ontological interrogation. Even a highly substantive work like Thomas Crow's *Painters and Public Life* (1985) makes no references to Jürgen Habermas, whose work Crowe brilliantly adapts to his purposes.³⁰ And so, with an eye to recent tendencies, we must acknowledge that, as important as psychoanalytic, neo-Marxist, feminist, have been in *art* history—and contextualism and poststructuralism in *architectural* history—in opening up or maintaining certain modes of analysis, they often succumb to a pattern that mimics avant-gardist practices of controlling history by *over*-controlling the historiographic. The claims of precision leave much unsaid.

"Historiography" is thus more than just what historians have to say about each other's work; it is the dialectical equivalent in his-

tory of the modernist notion of self-consciousness.³¹ It is the site where history constructs itself to its own advantage. It is thus used by avant-gardists, who, in the name of self-explication and autodidactic authenticity, invoke "history" to legitimate and contextualize their work. These efforts are sometimes genuinely "avant-garde." There are now, for example, many fine works of the architecture of the Russian revolution, for example, but that was not the case in the 1970s, when a group of architects, partially inspired by the 1970 MIT Press translation of El Lissitzky's *Russia: An Architecture for World Revolution*, found themselves drawn to the formal dynamism of the Soviet avant-garde, the culmination of which took the form of Philip Johnson's 1977 General American Life Insurance Co. Building in St. Louis (a well-strategized irony if there ever was one). Similarly, the so-called Texas Rangers at the University of Texas studied pictorial-theoretical aspects of Le Corbusier's work that were then nowhere addressed in the United States.³² Peter Eisenman's work forced a renewed interest in DeStijl; postmodern classicists renewed the flagging interest in antiquity and other forms of "contextualism." Today's "theory" is an attempt to extend this avant-gardism as a testament to the bourgeois slowness of academic history. But as theory becomes ever more academic, it too, by necessity, will be slowed by institutional requirements.

Scholars, of course, are already accustomed to the principle of slowness and thus claim to use historiography in a more responsible way, usually in the form of an introductory critique of the writings of other scholars. This protocol, encountered usually in the form of an abstract at the beginning of an article, is essential to the growth of the discipline, but it does not liberate scholarship from Enlightenment/modernist antihistoriographic compulsions to limit that which impinges on the epistemological center of the discipline. In essence, architectural history lacks a critique of its disciplinary aesthetic of objectivity in the same way that the avant-garde lacks a critique of its disciplinary aesthetics of subjectivity. Both sides make claims about "history" and its significance, and both structure their discourses to obscure the historiographic problematic that lies at the heart of everything modern.

Historiography is thus a slippery concept, for though it is a tool of disciplinary self-policing used to differentiate and elevate the practices of scholarship from those of the avant-garde, and vice versa, it lacks a critique adequate to the aesthetics of its practice.³³ It thus either protects the vested interest of a discipline (as in most scholarly practices), or disappears behind the veils of Selfhood (as in most avant-gardist practices). History is either suppressed or repressed into a type of discourse of utility. In all instances, historiography is the site of an intellectual functionalism that banishes unwanted re-

alities in the name of a clarified field of operation. In essence, it operates as the condition of maximum deception lurking within the discourses of intellection, whether they be scholarly or avant-gardist.

It might be unfair to expect artists and architects to deal with this paradox, but historians—and once again, especially those working on modern topics—have an obligation to recognize the problem, for it puts them, not the avant-garde, in *medias res* of the Enlightenment's unfinished business as it concerns the triangulated relationship between Self, history, and historiography. Those associated with New Historicism have, of course, made certain inroads in this direction by writing directly and forcefully about their own subject-position.³⁴ But art and architectural historians face the added problem of how to deal with a double modernity, namely that of the discipline they practice and that of the art that is the subject of their discourse, the one oriented by the principles of a supposedly critically informed objectivity, the other by the principle of a supposedly critically informed subjectivity. Art and architectural historians and critics apply the former to unravel the later, but the (modernist) scholarly Self as a site of intellectual interrogation—located in the space between modern science and modern art—is usually left untouched, even though we know that this historiographic aesthetic, when viewed with a positive coefficient, holds the very secrets to understanding not only our “modernity” but also the modernity of our subject matter. How do we separate means from ends? If avant-gardism has taught us anything, it is that one cannot separate means from ends; but it has also shown us that this failure is precisely modernity's victory.

The incalculable density of the problem belies the very notion of a recoverable discourse of objectivity.³⁵ The modernist historian is always the diagrammatic victim of his or her discipline's unrecoverable repressions.³⁶ But even though historians of modern art and architecture work in the locus of the modern crisis of Self, they tend to obliterate every trace of that crisis from their discourse. For example, in their eminently analytical *Modern Architecture*,³⁷ Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco dal Co do not mention a single historian, nor does Frederick Karl in *Modern and Modernism*, or Matei Calinescu in *Five Faces of Modernity*.³⁸ The absence of “the historian” in the history of modernism—and this in relationship to the manifest figuralness of the historian-as-author—represents a symptom of the historiographic crisis in which modernism operates. The historiographic, if it exists at all, is posited as something outside the processes of History when in reality it is the determining force. We need only think of the relationship between Adolf Behne and Walter Gropius, Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, and of Sigfried Giedion and Le Corbusier.³⁹ These relations may

point to the messy realism inherent in modernist intellection, but, for some reason, that reality is rarely the topic of our critical investigations.⁴⁰ The implication is that history and avant-gardism survive only when cleansed of their historiographic components.

Critical Historiography

There is a need for a historiographic project that is neither the handmaiden of a discipline nor an agent of the modernist call for the liberation of Self. The possibilities, which might start with simple disciplinary critiques, could be expanded to include ideological critiques and even galloping interdisciplinary diegeses.⁴¹ In all cases, a critical historiography (and, I should add, it is possible to envision an art or architectural practice as historiography!) functions on the principle that history and the production of art and architecture are only as strong as the historiography that simultaneously critiques them. There is no historicity that is authentic, and yet there is no history without the open-endedness and self-referentiality of historicity. The question is how far does one go in looking for connections?⁴²

Critical historiography as I define it accepts the fact that its project is inextricably associated with the rise of the modern bourgeoisie because, for better and worse, it is the only possible location for aesthetic indeterminacy. Critical historiography does not allow the escalating tendency toward the specialization and “objectification” of discourse (even ostensibly critical ones) to direct and coopt its mission without some form of resistance. In the same sense, it does not allow the modern, psychologically legitimated authorial Self to obscure its complicitous relationship with the falsely extrapolated objectivity of bourgeois culture. A critical historiography cannot attribute a higher self-consciousness to history writing. Nor can it accept a higher self-consciousness in aesthetic production (authenticity having long since become a metaphysical concept unhinged from its historicity).⁴³ Critical historiography thus points to the collusion between an antihistoriographically conceived aesthetic historicism in academic discourse and the necessary deceptions practiced by the avant-garde.⁴⁴ It is impossible to narrate the history of this collusion through a rational methodology, or even through the assumption of hegemonic systems of production.

Our *psychologized* modernity will thus have to be the first site of inquiry and not avant-gardism, for the latter is so saturated with psychologism that it is *eo ipso* uncritical from a historiographic point of view. Psychology claims for itself the status of science (replete with a disciplinary historiography to prove it many times over). And

yet, though seemingly detached from psychologism, it is the only discipline that is fully modern in that it is the only discipline that despite its scientific ambitions, moves against the grain of its disciplinary status. Sensitivity training, humanist psychology, Gestalt psychology, motivation psychology, industrial psychology, pop psychology, occupational psychology, crowd psychology, sports psychology, sales psychology, child psychology, courtroom psychology, and, of course, reverse psychology are just a few of the modes that operate latently, or blatantly, in our culture and condition our attitudes, usually with the most traceless of residues.⁴⁵ Not only does psychology thus have no precise academic center, its epistemological structure can be centered and recentered almost anywhere. Psychology tries to focus on the "difficulty" of modernity in order to legitimate a *disciplinary* resolution, without realizing that it is responsible for that same difficulty. Critical Historiography helps create a fractured dialectical response to this double disciplining of modernity, for it can challenge not only psychology-as-discipline, understood in an academic sense, but also the "everywhereness" of psychology (and thus the concomitant "everywhereness" of a modernity that follows in its wake). A critical historiography, in questioning the constructions of subjectivity, thus has to work counter to an *already* theorized and *de*-theorized intellectual world. It can reach to history only when it is posited simultaneously as presence and absence, even though as a result it can critique itself only through an analysis of the tortured interconnections of Self to pre-existent, filial-disciplinary formations, which, like psychology, are written into the genetic code of our everywhereness.

History must, therefore, be forced to encounter the shadow of its historiographic deceptions, if only to counteract the tendency in both art and scholarship to conjoin history with its own self-protective historiographic legitimations. A critical historiography, in an effort to escape this imperative, must allow the subject to externalize its aesthetic compulsions while also allowing it to discover its status as *topos*.⁴⁶ We cannot, therefore, hope to produce a more accurate account of the Self in relation to history. We can only demonstrate a more tortured interrelationship between art and textuality, and beyond that, between art and thinking. History is not the authentic form of history-unto-itself, but a mode of operating by which presences consume their own disguises. Critical historiography will thus have to develop a multiperspectival critique of our subjectivized and disciplined modernity so as to provide (in the sense essayed by Foucault) the basis for a more cogent struggle against a discourse that has no visible center. The word "critical" does not, therefore, suggest an alternative to disciplinary historiography, which will remain the dominant modality of modern self-

projection. Rather, it alludes to the fundamental nature of history's disciplinary homelessness and diagrammatic incompleteness. Following De Certeau, one could add that there is no correspondence between a discipline and the unruly practices that sustain it. One will always be able to find pathways around, through, or under it, making use, maybe in an opportunistic way, of the cracks and fissures that one encounters.⁴⁷

There is, of course, no escaping the possible aesthetic nature of the process.⁴⁸ And yet, one can still try to position history in a migratory mode, at the border of its disciplinary thinking, in order to allow the intellect room for ideological self-criticism as well as for the meta-ideological (postpsychological) multiplicities in which all intellectual work is constituted. This is not to undermine the pre-eminence of ideology as a way to resist hegemonic systems but to point to the inevitable problematic of ideological agendas that, even where they are worthy, fail to admit to and account for their own disciplinary ambitions.

In essence, critical historiography rejects the idea that the interdisciplinarity of critique is the same as the interdisciplinarity of life, and rejects as well that it can all come together, so to speak, in a unity of conscious reflection.⁴⁹ On the contrary, its goal is for unities to unravel in the process of conscious reflection. And once begun, there is no way out of the game, for in the end, the historiographer and the subject under the stress of analysis (which ultimately will always be the Self) become parasites of one another. But since the culture of aesthetic production (which is incapable of critically reflecting on its historical evolution) becomes the production of aesthetic culture, the researcher, who must participate in both realities, is always the victim of various systems of disinformation (including self-inflicted disinforming). Critical historiography accepts the inevitability of these slippages, but separates them at the same time that it superimposes them onto one another so as to probe the crisis of meaning inherent in all studies of the arts and humanities.

The problem is that this repressed part of our intellectual history has in some sense "no history," and it is for this reason that one has to resort to the problematic domain of historiography, replete with all Enlightenment anxieties. The very same bourgeois culture that fabricates history also oversees its silencing. Like a blind spot, history survives despite the textual Other that is contained within it. Thus, over and against the historicity of individual "authors," there is the looming historicity of a discipline's textuality, a domain that is precisely *not* psychological, but rather defined by the marketplace, intellectual trends, chance encounters, and academic conceits just as much as the desire for genuine expression. We must restore a level of historicity to this complex textual culture, which means

that history's endless mutations—particularly those outside the confines of the discipline—cannot be ignored.⁵⁰ The ontological historicity that so interested the early moderns and that was to become so important in twentieth-century aesthetic presumptions—a historicity still lurking behind the facade of scholarship—must be met by a textual historicity that always lies just outside the seductions of psychological unity.⁵¹

It must, therefore, still be possible to envision historiographic metafiction that aim to situate the subject in history as well as in discourse.⁵² Naturally, the more that is revealed, the more that is concealed; but at least there should be a balance. For moving through a multitude of disciplines *in* history—while simultaneously thinking of the constraints *of* history—widens the indeterminate zone not only between subject and object, but also between the historian as “professional” and the historian as a possible “messenger” of repressed historicity.⁵³ The only consolation is that, where one subsumes, the other exhumes; where one attempts to banish artifice in order to make way for meaning, the other tries to banish art to make way for the multiple paradoxes of artifice; where one points outside itself to the success or failure of aesthetic production, the other questions whether that production can ever be “experienced,” save in the *terribilità* of bourgeois consciousness.

Critical historiography is not, I would insist, a nihilistic celebration of chaos, nor does it make any claim about the end of history. It acknowledges the importance of narcissistic metafiction, but also the need for the traditional corroborative spirit historians rely on to connect to one another. But instead of these researches ending in the necessarily obtuse and slow protocols of academic rigor, they can be folded back into the speeded-up temporality of avant-gardism. Connection is not easy, for the rethinking of the unities that drive theoretical-historical discourses requires both unifying and concealing operations that emanate from the aesthetic ego. And these can easily be diverted toward established disciplinary protocols. Nonetheless, one should try to help bring out of hiding the “productive unclarity of dialectical thought,” to use Hans Gadamer’s words, in a way that protests against the attempts—whether in theory or in historical discourse—to erase, forget, deny, if not overtly obliterate historical and theoretical issues in the name of modernity’s ostensible drive toward autonomy.⁵⁴ A critical historiography can, of course, never lay bare the greater truth of the past. Historiography is *not* history, but rather a critique that simulates history in order to expose the imperative of closure.⁵⁵ History, long before the historian sets to work, has precluded the possibility of critical historiography in its pretensions as a humanist discipline. Historiography can, therefore, fulfill its humanist mission only by

taking up the uncomfortable position of an uninvited guest in its own house, but historians are not encouraged to bring these issues into the foreground, and thus remain cut off from the very experiences that determine what it means to be modern.

Notes

1. The relationship between Buber and Mendelsohn is an important forerunner of later relationships between architects and philosophers. Because of the problematics of Jewishness, however, the Mendelsohn–Buber connection was never included into the discussion about modernist avant-gardism. Mendelsohn, for example, does not appear in Giedion’s *Space, Time and Architecture*. In the tenth edition (1954), he is finally mentioned, even if only in passing. For a good discussion of Buber’s impact on the architect Erich Mendelsohn, see Alona Nitzan-Shifman, “Erich Mendelsohn from Berlin to Jerusalem,” Master’s Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, 1993.

2. There are two referents to this claim, one being that of Hegel and his critique of history, and the other being Nietzsche and his critique of Self. Philosophy today has first of all to accept our complicities in both these projects, but it has to maneuver one against the other in an unending cycle of critical reflections.

3. László Moholy-Nagy, “Isms or Art,” in *Moholy-Nagy*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 34–37.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 35. As this quotation reveals, the argument, though it seems to start out with a strong case, is internally flawed. If art is such an expression of our “subconsciousness,” how do we deal with the fact that the “subconscious” aspects of our time are precisely those that generate Isms? Moholy-Nagy is working on a false opposition that privileges creativity by displacing the causes of modernist anxiety in fields external to its own subconsciousness. It is not an Ism, but a topos, the “Life versus Abstraction” topos, that is fundamental to the space of modernity’s psychologized discourses.

5. For an excellent discussion, see Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism, 1848–1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

6. *The Works of John Ruskin*, vol. 5, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903–1912), p. 353.

7. László Moholy-Nagy, “On the Problem of New Content and New Form,” (1922), in Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 287.

8. László Moholy-Nagy, “Abstract of an Artist,” in Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy*, p. 364.

9. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung. Lessing, Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin: vier Aufsätze* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1906) pp. 88 and 293 (my translation); see also 3rd. ed. (Leipzig: B. Teubner, 1910), selections of which (essays on Goethe and Hölderlin) were published in English as “Poetry and Lived Experience,” *Wilhelm Dilthey. Selected Works*, vol. 5, *Poetry and Experience*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), pp. 233–383. Passages quoted here are from a later German edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965).

10. *Ibid.*, p. 441 (my translation).

11. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Pattern and Meaning in History*, ed. and intro. H. P. Rickman (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 162.

12. Wilhelm Dilthey, “The Three Epochs of Modern Aesthetics and Its Present Task,” trans. Michael Neville, in *Wilhelm Dilthey. Selected Works*, vol. 5, *Poetry and Experience*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton, NJ:

Princeton University Press, 1985), 175–222. Originally published as “Die drei Epochen der modernen Aesthetik und ihre heutige Aufgabe,” in *Die Deutsche Rundschau* 18 (1892): 267–303. Reprinted in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 19 vols. (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914–1982), vol. 6, pp. 242–287 (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1905).

13. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 179.

14. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 221.

15. Wilhelm Dilthey, “Introduction to the Human Sciences,” chap. 6, “The Connection of Outer and Inner Perception in the Recognition and Understanding of Other Persons,” *Wilhelm Dilthey. Selected Works*, vol. 3. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, eds. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 388–391.

16. Herbert Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, trans. Seyla Benhabib (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), pp. 3ff. Marcuse's *Ontologie und die Grundlegung einer Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit* was first published in 1932. Dilthey thus gave Lessing a national mission that Wieland could not fulfill. Lessing broke the bounds of theological rationalism that Dilthey felt had constrained the Enlightenment. He positions Lessing in the context of a more complex secular modernity.

17. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Pattern and Meaning in History*, p. 163.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 167–168.

19. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 11 (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann, 1971), p. 25 (my translation).

20. For a discussion, see Stephen Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), p. 27.

21. Adolf Behne was the noted defender of Walter Gropius, Herbert Read of Henry Moore, Clement Greenberg of Jackson Pollock, and Vincent Scully of Robert Venturi, to name just a few pairings. See, for example, Adolf Behne, *Neues Wohnen, Neues Bauen* (Leipzig: Hesse & Becker Verlag, 1927) and Vincent Scully, “Introduction” to Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977).

22. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer als Erzieher*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7 (Munich: Musarion, 1922), vol. 7, p. 117.

23. The critique of “scholars” is now so pervasive that it is basically the avant-garde at its most predictable. According to Arthur Danto in *Encounters and Reflections. Art in the Historical Present* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1986): “Now there is no question that Courbet's painting does not have its meaning exhausted when we have, as it were, all the facts that art history is capable of nailing down. . . . There is nothing further for art history to explain, and yet everything important remains to be grasped, even if it cannot be said” (p. 310).

Danto is Johnsonian Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Columbia University. He is also art critic for *The Nation* and president and editor of the *Journal of Philosophy*. His publications on art include *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); *The State of the Art* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1987); *Beyond the Brillo Box: Art in the Post-Historical Period* (New York: Noonday, 1992).

Even historians show their mettle according to Bruce Allsopp in *The Future of the Arts* (London: Pitman, 1959): “Art history can tend to foster misunderstanding and I think it is true to say that the academic study of art may have done more harm than good because it has made an intellectual discipline of what should be an experience of something precious” (pp. 83–84).

Bruce Allsopp graduated from Liverpool School of Architecture in 1933. After the war, he taught at the University of Durham as Lecturer in Architecture, becoming Senior Lecturer in 1955 and director in 1965. He was chairman of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain from 1961–1965 and is the author of three historical novels and numerous books on architectural history and

aesthetics. In 1962 he founded the Oriel Press in London, and from 1962 to 1985 he directed the London publisher, Routledge & Kegan Paul. During this time, the press brought out a number of important works in art psychology. Among Allsopp's own writings are *Art and the Nature of Architecture* (London: Pitman, 1952); *Style in the Visual Arts* (London: Isaac Pitman, 1955); *A History of Renaissance Architecture* (London: Isaac Pitman, 1959); *The Future of the Arts* (London: Isaac Pitman, 1959); *Towards a Humane Architecture* (London: Frederick Muller, 1974); *Social Responsibility and the Responsible Society* (Stocksfield [Northumberland], Boston & Henley-on-Thames [Oxfordshire]: Oriel Press, 1984).

24. Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. Douglas Ainslie (New York: Noonday Press, 1953), p. 28. Historiography can, of course, never be “lived” except by a bibliophile.

25. Even Walter Benjamin made experience the cornerstone of his speculations, arguing that “[t]he structure of experience” should lie “within the structure of knowledge.” Walter Benjamin, “On the Program of the Coming Philosophy,” in *Benjamin: Philosophy, History, Aesthetics*, trans. Mark Ritter, ed. Gary Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 5. See also Susan Buck-Morss, *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

26. Anderson is currently chairman of the Department of Architecture at MIT. He was the director of the History-Theory-Criticism Section from 1975–1995. He wrote his dissertation, *Peter Behrens and the New Architecture of Germany 1900–1917*, at Columbia University (1968). Portions of it have been published in “Modern Architecture and Industry: Peter Behrens, the AEG, and Industrial Design,” *Oppositions* 21 (summer 1980): 78–97, and in “Modern Architecture and Industry: Peter Behrens and the AEG Factories,” *Oppositions* 23 (winter 1981): 52–83.

Tafari gets much of the credit for rejuvenating historical research in architecture in Europe. At the end of his life he worked in a style called “microhistories.” For a good discussion of Tafari see: Helene Lipstadt and Harvey Mendelsohn, “Philosophy, History, and Autobiography: Manfredo Tafari and the “Unsurpassed Lesson” of Le Corbusier,” *Assemblage* 22 (Dec. 1993): pp. 58–103; and *ibid.*, “Tafari and Le Corbusier,” *Casabella* 59 (Jan./Feb. 1995): 86–95.

Frampton, Ware Professor of Architecture at Columbia University, is best known as a champion of Critical Regionalism. A list of some of his works are: *Modern Architecture and the Critical Present* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982); *Tadao Ando: Buildings, Projects, Writings* (New York: Rizzoli, 1984); *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985); *Alvaro Siza: Poetic Profession* (London: Architectural Press, 1986); *Building in a New Spain: Contemporary Spanish Architecture* (Chicago & Barcelona: Art Institute of Chicago, 1992); *Calatrava Bridges* (Zurich: Artemis, 1993); *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

27. In this list, one would include Anthony Vidler, now at the University of California in Los Angeles and Diane Ghirardo at the University of Southern California. Ghirardo, as executive editor of the *Journal of Architectural Education*, was especially influential.

28. Udo Kulturmann's *History of Art History* (New York: Abaris Books, 1993), originally published as *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte: der Weg einer Wissenschaft* (Vienna & Dusseldorf: Econ-Verlag, 1966), is a good example. In its positivist inclusiveness of every conceivable scholar and intellectual movement, it portrays a field that has finally covered all the bases. This applies to architectural history as well. Architectural history as a discipline is, I would argue, more complex, than art history, since it is more intimately connected to both the history discourses that come from practice and criticism.

29. The discipline of architecture followed a pattern similar to that of art.

Beginning in the 1970s, master's degrees were being awarded by MIT, Harvard, and other schools of architecture. Alexander Caragonne's *The Texas Rangers: Notes from an Architectural Underground* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995) is one of the few books that views with any seriousness the impact of teachers and pedagogues on modernist aesthetic theories and practices. Studies of teaching methods are usually reserved for the "great" modernists. The Texas Rangers produced few famous buildings, but had a tremendous impact through their teaching. For autobiographical reasons, this book is particularly important to me, for I studied under Bernard Hoesli at the Swiss Federal Polytechnical University, or Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) in Zurich, where Hoesli, a former Texas Ranger, was on the faculty.

30. Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

31. I greatly admire Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). An excellent book that admits some of the same problems is Sande Cohen's *Historical Culture: On the Recoding of an Academic Discipline* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). Another work of interest is Barbara Maria Stafford's *Body Criticism: Imagining the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993).

32. See: Alexander Caragonne's *The Texas Rangers: Notes from an Architectural Underground* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

33. Unlike the discipline of history, neither the history of art nor architecture has ever passed through a contextualist phase, and thus neither field has experience in articulating its advantages and disadvantages.

34. See Stephen Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder," in *Learning to Curse, Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 167. Greenblatt cites the following works: Louis Adrian Montrose, "Renaissance Literary Studies and the Subject of History," in *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1986), pp. 5-12; and Don Waynes, "Power, Politics, and the Shakespearean Text: Recent Criticism in England and the United States," in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, ed. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 47-67. Greenblatt goes on to state that "If I have not done so to the same extent, it is not because I believe that my values are somehow suspended in my study of the past, but because I believe they are pervasive: in the textual visual traces I choose to analyze, in the stories I choose to tell, in the cultural conjunctions I attempt to make, in my syntax, adjectives, pronouns."

35. Peter J. McCormick's *Modernity, Aesthetics, and the Bounds of Art* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990) is an excellent work on the subjectivity argument of nineteenth- and twentieth-century aesthetic theories. But since it looks at the history of philosophy as the history of leading professional philosophical talent, it silently reinforces the very notion of the privileged subjectivity that was posited in the neo-Kantian philosophy that the author wishes to study. The impact of "subjectivity" transcends philosophical speculation about subjectivity because it has seeped into our bourgeois capitalist culture. There are very few histories of philosophy that "snoop down," so to speak, to investigate the relationship between "high" philosophy and philosophy as indistinguishable from popular culture.

36. Richard Shiff has noticed the problematic position that "experience" has acquired, even in a poststructuralist discourse that has never lived up to its ambition of exposing reality to ever more intense observation. Experience, he points out, is not something that can be figured out of the discussion as if it were simply irrelevant. See Richard Shiff, "Handling Shocks: On the Representation of Experience in Walter Benjamin's Analogies," in *The Oxford Art Journal* 15/2 (1992): 89.

37. Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, trans.

Robert Erich Wolf (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1976). The authors mention Sigfried Giedion, but as "a critic" (*ibid.*, p. 246).

38. Frederick R. Karl, *Modern and Modernism, The Sovereignty of the Artist 1885-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1988). Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).

39. Ruskin's admiration for George Edmund Street constitutes one of the earliest critic-architect alliance of modernity. Street (b. 1824) was noted for his Victorian Gothic. Ruskin is particularly important for Street's book *Brick and Marble in the Middle Ages; Notes on a Tour in the North of Italy* (1855). For a discussion, see Michale W. Brooks, *John Ruskin and Victorian Architecture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), pp. 156ff. See also: Sigfried Giedion, "Art Means Reality" in Gyorgy Kepes, *Language of Vision* (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1944) and Giedion, *Walter Gropius* (Paris: G. Cres, 1931). A more recent example is the "Introduction" that Colin Rowe wrote for *Five Architects: Eisenman, Graves, Gwathmey, Hejduck, Meier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 3-8. Kenneth Frampton also wrote an introductory essay for the volume. See also William Curtis, "Alvaro Siza: An Architecture of Edges," *Alvaro Siza* (Basel: Birkhauser, 1969), pp. 32-45.

40. For a discussion of the relationship between Scully and Stern in particular, see Mark Jarzombek, "The Saturations of Self: Stern's (and Scully's) Role in (Stern's) History" *Assemblage* 33, 1997, pp. 6-21.

41. As an example of the first, see Nigel Whiteley, "Banham and 'Otherness': Reyner Banham (1922-1988) and his Quest for an Architecture Autre." *Architectural History* 33 (1990): 188-221. As an example of the second, see Alice T. Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998); and as an example of the last, see Roland Barthes, *Michelet* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987). Barthes intersperses excerpts from Michelet's writings with his own commentary to show how thoroughly modern Michelet appears today.

42. Yael Zerubavel allows her awkward positioning between cultures to guide her investigations. Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). For another work that takes this approach, see Vikramaditya Prakash, "Production of Identity in (Post) Colonial Indian Architecture: Hegemony and Its Discontents," (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1994). I would argue that the work of architect Jennifer Bloomer also resides in a guardedly open interplay between biography, intellectual influence, and the search for artistic expression. See her "Tablets of Bower," in *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts: Art, Media, Architecture*, ed. Peter Brunette and David Wills (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 228-247. Bloomer attempts a type of applied autobiography that allows for a complex overlapping of investigations into motherhood, scholarship, and artistic production that never descends into the "I am a great artist" pathos. Bloomer admits everything from scholarly critique to incidental assistance in her work. At the opposite end from this approach lies the essay by Charles Altieri published in the same volume, "Frank Stella and Jacques Derrida: Toward a Postmodern Ethics of Singularity," *ibid.*, pp. 168-187. Altieri's work makes the equations philosopher-as-artist and artist-as-philosopher without interrogating the topos inherent in those equations.

43. For an excellent discussion of the impact of the "innocent eye" motif on architectural pedagogical thinking, see: Kazys Varnelis, "The Education of the Innocent Eye," *JAÉ* 51 (May 1998): 212-223.

44. Interdisciplinary historiography is *not* the same as interdisciplinary research, which often works against the needs of interdisciplinary historiography. The latter, one way or another, must adhere to the ideals of objectivity; the former sub-

sumes "objectivity" into the critique of its own ideology. In other words, interdisciplinary research, though obviously important, does not in and of itself problematize its objectivity. This frees it to make history an active participant in its self-representational disguises. A work with important historiographic implications on how reality is constructed is Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986). Another work in which historiographic critique is the premise for historical analysis is Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

45. As an undergraduate student at the University of Chicago, I was taught in a philosophy class that "looking" was the highest form of intellectual awareness. Only much later did I begin to question the underlying assumptions, often being told that to do so was to challenge the basic right of art and architecture to their legitimate places in philosophical speculation.

46. Once again, this is not to say that there are artists who are not great thinkers, only that one must hold in question the relationship between artists-as-thinkers and a discourse that validates and reaffirms that particular equation to satisfy the historical legitimacy of aesthetic consciousness.

47. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 96.

48. In "Telling It as You Like It: Postmodernist History and the Flight from Fact," *Times Literary Supplement*, Oct. 16, 1992, pp. 32. Gertrude Himmelfarb, the well-known critic of the new social history of the 1960s and 1970s, condemned scholars like Hayden White, who, she says, champion the "aestheticization" of history. She claims that White makes no distinction between history and literature. The trouble is that Himmelfarb's critique, though in some respects reasonable, is too narrow, for, as is all too common, she fails to differentiate history from historiography, as I am trying to do here. A critical historiography, I believe, has no choice but to look beyond rigid boundaries around the definition of history, and this will inevitably mean that the historian walks on territory that has been designated as unfamiliar. But since critical historiography is a history of history, it cannot be "just literature," for it is constrained by its own interrogations into the discipline. I am not, therefore, championing the "aestheticization" of history in a bland hope for a better history. But I do argue that that "aestheticization" is not a postmodernist affectation. It is inherent to everything modern, including the very definition of the discipline of history, which cannot extract itself from the problem simply because it is tied to method and profession. I see no particular reason for despair, however, for historiography, ultimately, is an academic interest, which, despite its controlling mechanisms (which need to be critiqued, of course), creates enough checks and balances to guard against too great a slippage between history and literature.

49. Here, I am compelled to express the hope for a unity between a "lived" interdisciplinarity and scholarly antidisciplinarity, but I recognize that would be of such a special nature (and furthermore, there would most likely be no academic discipline concerned with it) that the intellectual community might fail to recognize it.

50. We are inundated with texts of all sorts, now including that of the World Wide Web, the result being an incomprehensible range of disseminations that defy any historical accounting. Disciplinary historiography has almost no choice but to consolidate the textual in a manner that is beneficial to the purposes of disciplinary identities. But if we look outside these boundaries, it becomes clear that we have very little idea how textuality interacts with our individual historicities. With vast public libraries, the proliferation of cheap paperbacks, and journals of every stripe, not to mention the rampant nontextual transmission of media discourses via radio, television, film, and the Internet, the spread of ideas and the matter of their reception can scarcely be charted, let alone be fully understood.

Friendships, graduate studies, mentorships, reading lists, libraries, and research institutions have historically played the principal roles, and yet these leave the most elusive of traces.

51. Let's take as an example Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941). For many years, this was the bible of modernist architectural theory, a work that established the historical legitimacy of Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, and others. It was read by thousands in architecture classrooms and studios around the country. How do we assess Giedion's indebtedness to the writings of Giambattista Vico from the end of the eighteenth century? How do we assess his Hegelianism? In what way were Vico and Hegel recalibrated across time, language, and culture, and what were the implications of these survivals—undetectable as they were to most of the American readers—for the architecture of the 1940s and 1950s? In what way did Giedion's idealism reinforce the progressivist illusions and fantasies of postwar America? To address these questions, one has to deal with the fundamental way in which illusions become reality. On Giedion, see my, "The Crisis of Interdisciplinary Historiography," in *JAE* 44/3 (May 1991): 150–155.

And for another example: Dewey once claimed that when he was a student, he and his friends all clutched to their chests copies of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection in the Formation of a Manly Character on the Several Grounds of Prudence, Morality and Religion* (London: Taylor and Hessey, Thomas Davison, 1825). In what way is this text, now obscure, still present in the American consciousness? It is a matter of admittedly limited theoretical interest, but it is nonetheless a legitimate historiographical question.

52. For an excellent discussion, see Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1980).

53. To label this "postmodernist" is, I believe, all too easy. "Postmodernism" is only one possible adjective that might be applicable to metafictional historiography.

54. Particularly relevant here is Dominic La Capra's *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983). I remember attending a conference in which graduate students had produced a reading list of important books and passages. I did not pick up the reading list, scoffing at the idea that reading a few pages from Heidegger, a chapter from Hegel, and a book by Bachelard could actually constitute intellectual erudition. Now I wish I had taken the sheet, for I could use it as an example of the way ideas become decontextualized and recontextualized into complex genealogies. But the apparent collaging and mutilation of theoretical discourse that is so integral to both modernist and postmodernist theory does not mean, as is sometimes suggested, that we live in a theory-pluralistic society, where we can each have our own theories custom-tailored to our needs and wishes. The illusion of pluralism not only legitimates bourgeois hypocrisy, but also serves to hide the circumstance that we inhabit theoretical constructs that have been disowned and stripped bare of their personality long before we set out to reconstruct them in our drive toward self-understanding.

55. I would also say that critical historiography is an indication of bewilderment. A modernist psychological reading would assert that this condition is indicative of a loss of cultural focus and absence of will on the part of the author. A psychoanalytic reading would hold that it is a result of childhood trauma that has created a disjuncture between the Self and its self-reflection. A disciplinary reading would say that it is a result of lack of scholarly preparedness. Nonetheless, critical historiography functions out of and toward the principle of bewilderment as its readings move toward the horizon of the illegible.